



COUNTY OF ERIE

Erie County Planning Commission

Erie County Courthouse
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Edward Kissell
Chair

Gerry Dahl
Vice-Chair

**ERIE COUNTY PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES**

April 14th, 2016

A meeting of the Erie County Planning Commission was held at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 14th, 2016 in the Admiral Room at the Raymond M. Blasco, M.D. Memorial Library, 160 East Front St., Erie PA.

Those in attendance were:

ECPC Executive Board Members:	Representing:
Paul Pangratz	Girard Twp
William Kuhn	Platea Boro + ECAB
Patricia Pfadt	Venango Twp
Flory Kondzielski	Waterford Twp
Charles Casey	City of Erie
Jim Cardman	Fairview Twp
Ed Kissell	Erie County
Gerry E. Dahl	Erie County
ECPC Members:	
Mark Kukla	Lawrence Park Twp
Kurt Lichtenfeld	North East Twp
Ken Barner	Elk Creek Twp
Matthew Waldinger	Millcreek Twp
John Kaufman	Cranesville Boro
Will Rogers	North East Boro
Planning Department Staff:	
Katherine Wyrosdick	Director of Planning
Rena Trapp	County Planning
Guests:	
Amanda Blair	Fairview Township

Executive Board members present – 8 of 9; quorum attained

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Charles Casey called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Bill Kuhn seconded the motion and the pledge of allegiance was given.

II. APPROVAL OF March 10TH 2016, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes of March 10th, 2016 as submitted by Charles Casey and Seconded by Bill Kuhn. All members in favor, none opposed.

III. Hearing of the Public

None.

IV. ECDP Activity Report

ECDP Erie Impact Newsletter Issue II

Rena Trapp from County Planning gave a brief update on what's happening with the current newsletter which will be released next week. The newsletter made its first debut in February and will be issued on a quarterly basis. This issue will introduce the new transportation planner, Christopher Friday and also gives an overview of what the MPO does in Erie County. County Planning is also looking at ways to integrate social media in order to appeal to a younger audience on issues in local communities and the region alike. The ECCP is also working to create a better online resource for local governments through the ECDP webpage.

Long Range Transportation Plan Update and Greenways Plan Update to become sustainable transportation plan

Kathy Wyrosdick discussed the County Planning's next batch of projects which include updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Erie County Greenways Plan. The two plans will be updated concurrently in order to provide a more comprehensive focus on multi-modal transportation. The County has community assets and should link them. County Planning Staff, along with the MPO will look at alternative ways to implement sustainable transportation modes into the conversation beyond just roads and bridges. The last transportation plan really focused less on alternative transportation such as trains, busses and bike-ped.

Mr. Cardman inquired about Greenways Grant funding and expressed his support for the idea of a county-wide bike project because it would have a larger impact than just on the bayfront area alone.

Kathy explained the planning process. First, the County MPO will create a LRTP updated plan and the County Planning Department will complete a Greenways Plan. Local funding will then be used to leverage state level funding for bigger impact on regional

projects. The idea is to use the funding for a larger regional project, rather than middle, or smaller projects. This must be planned well and County Planning must obtain secure funding sources in order to make a regional impact. This way, both the Greenways Plan and the Transportation Plan will work together.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

County Planning is working with the County Department of Public Safety on preliminary work for this plan and are waiting for official dates of expected completion.

ZHB Training- April 20th, 5-8:30, Summit Township

Kathy Wyrosdick informed the ECPC of the Zoning Hearing Board Training which will be held next Wednesday, with dinner, at a minimal fee. Those who would like to go and have not yet received an invite should let her know. Fifty- five people signed up so far. This training will show leaders what a planning commission is supposed to be and it is their responsibility to continue training and follow ZHB compliance. In total, three hours of training will be given after dinner and a brief introduction.

Emerge 2040 update – May 9th, 4-6 PM at Ambassador Banquet Center, 8894 Peach Street

Kathy invited the ECPC to attend the discussion of the Emerge 2040 plan update. The plan first launched a year ago and Anna will discuss where the plan is at as of the current-date. During this meeting, the stakeholders affected by the plan will be present and you will be given an overview of how the plan has already made an impact on certain areas and what's next for the plan.

V. Old Business

Review of By-laws and membership

Kathy Wyrosdick reached out to Mr. Puko of the DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development). Mr. Puko knows much of Erie County's History, in particular, the ECPC, which began in 1972. Kathy looked for information about the original laws and structure of the ECPC and how the commission came to be what it is today. She was motivated to do so because it is apparent that what the ECPC is doing, simply isn't working. Not only did she look into the history of the ECPC, but also looked into what other Counties within the Commonwealth are doing to get a better idea of how the commission should be functioning. Kathy shared her research with the commission, finding that in 1977, Mercer County and its municipalities were looking towards creating a joint planning commission. The MPC allowed this joint planning commission because it essentially serves as the planning commission for every municipality and this was part of the Mercer County Plan. Municipalities opted-into the planning commission and they paid a fee. For example, they may have charged sixty cents per person for their population. So, essentially the planning department works for the Mercer County Planning Commission. They served all municipalities in the County with sixty members but it is the only Planning Commission for all member municipalities.

Around the same time period, Erie County tried to create a similar model. The membership was expanded to 48 but the role of the Commission acting on behalf of all municipalities was never realized. The expanded membership made it difficult to meet the qualifications for a quorum so in 1994 the ECPC By-laws were modified to create an Executive Board. The purpose of this Board was an attempt to meet the membership requirements for a regular Planning Commission as enumerated within the MPC. That membership requires between 5 up to 9 members for the Planning Commission and that those members are to be appointed by the Governing Body.

After sharing this information, Kathy asked the commission to think about this example and decide what kind of planning commission we want for Erie County. Do we want to be a joint planning commission that fulfills the role of all Planning Commissions for Erie County municipalities? Or do we want to be a nine member planning commission that appointed by county council and has roles and responsibilities that are only essential to the county rather than each individual municipality? Kathy emphasized just how important it is to get the planning commission to a point where it needs to be that's in alignment with the MPC.

Bill Kuhn expressed his concerns with the idea of a joint-planning commission and provided examples of times in which he felt the municipalities were not represented by the ECPC and the County ignored the local's requests. In the past, he was jaded by the governing body in West Springfield where he lives. Often times, he would elect someone who has a plan to keep taxes down and when they put their plan to action, it required up-front investment from citizens. This is not something he agreed with, but had no choice and feels municipalities also pay for County's decisions. He does not support the idea that the current structure of the Erie County Planning Commission which appears to be a Joint Planning Commission should or will function as one.

Kathy Wyrosdick responded by saying that she agreed that a joint planning commission acting on behalf of all Erie County municipalities would not be embraced by communities. Especially since all of them have their own Planning Commissions and do not need a joint planning Commission.

Mr. Ed Kissell expressed his feelings on the matter, saying quorum is an issue and people don't attend because we are thought of as, "the toothless dog."

Kathy expressed, furthermore how Planning has taken a back seat to political will. She explained how the planning commission is intended to be the voice of the people, advising the governing body on community and economic development issues. The planning commission is supposed to be the strong advocates for moving forward and making progressive change, rather than sitting back and being reactionary to things going on in municipalities. Under the structure of the joint planning commission, the ECPC fell short. The ECPC was trying to do what Mercer County was doing which is run completely different than Erie County. At this time, Kathy asked each and every member to think about what they want for the ECPC and this conversation will continue at a later date.

VI. New Business

Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers for 2016

**Erie County Planning Commission
Nominating Committee Report**

2016 Executive Board and Officer Nominations

The nominating committee respectfully submits the following recommendations to the Erie County Planning Commission for appointments to the 2016 Executive Board:

<u>*Representing</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>ECPC Term</u>
County Council	Carol J. Loll	2013-16
County of Erie	Edward S. Kissell	2016-19
County of Erie	Gerry Dahl	2016-19
Erie City	Charles S. Casey	2014-17
Fairview Township	Jim Cardman	2013-16
Girard Township	Paul Pangratz	2015-18
Platea Borough	William Kuhn	2016-19
Venango Township	Patricia Pfadt	2014-17
Waterford Township	Flory Kondzielski	2015-18

The Nominating Committee recommends appointment of the following ECPC members as officers of the 2016 Executive Board:

<u>Edward S. Kissell</u>	Chairman
<u>Gerry E. Dahl</u>	Vice-Chairman

Submitted 4/5/2016 by,
James Cardman,
Executive Board Nominating Committee Chair

At this time, Mr. Cardman, Nominating Committee Chair made reference to the ECPC By-Laws, Art. V. Sec. A, "The officers and Executive Board shall hold office for one (1) year beginning in February, or until their successors are elected and assume office and shall be eligible for re-election, except that the Chairperson's term shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) consecutive years." According to the By-Laws, Mr. Dahl has extinguished the life of his term as the Board Chair. Still, it would be acceptable for him to serve as the Vice Chair as the MPC does not specify otherwise. Mr. Dahl has opted to accept his new role as Vice Chair. Mr. Kissell will serve as the new Chair for the 2016-

2019 term. Motion to accept the nominating committee's proposal for Officers was set by Mr. Jim Cardman and seconded by Mr. Bill Kuhn. All in favor, none opposed.

Municipalities Matter survey results and next steps

Katherine Wyrosdick, Director of County Planning and the ECPC, then gave the results of the Municipalities Matter Survey which had over sixty percent representation from municipal officials. Still, we have not received a response from some municipalities. She will continue to reach out to them with the open survey. She then thanked the municipalities who submitted more than once response and shared with the ECPC a few areas that expressed a high need for services. Those included were, project management, grant administration, code enforcement in cities, interest in land banks, business training support, basic document management, residential/municipal internet access, and ordinance writing.

Recycling got a very strong response in all areas, especially for Hazardous Waste removal. Although, we will see less Educational Support from the Recycling Program due to Waste Management not being part of educational programs. Currently, Brittany is providing training on how to inspect a building for energy efficiency with information about efficient options for insulation, lighting, and heat. Still, there is a high-need for this service at this time.

Overall, the survey brought great insight of where the needs are within the County and we hope to gather more responses so we can hear from every municipality, and better determine where to shift our focus.

The Commissioner

Another thing that County Planning is able to provide through the American Planning Association is a newsletter called the Commissioner. It contains stories about the many measures planners must go through and situations we must deal with. Kathy pulled an article relevant to today's meeting...a very good article about how meetings should be conducted and also talks about mission ethics.

Planning Advisory Service

Kathy shared new information with the ECPC about a model zoning ordinance, created by Mr. John McGranor from County Planning. He chose to use Venango Township as the pilot Municipality to create this model zoning ordinance. This model is up-to-date, available to all municipalities, and it can be utilized in its entirety or in sections. This plan also contains updated information and recommendations for wireless communications. The ECDP is willing to work with municipalities who are in need of further assistance to find out which model ordinances are needed for an individual municipality.

Aside from assisting municipalities with updating their ordinances, the ECDP is also working on training for zoning hearing board members and promote the best practices happening

in our county. County Planning expresses this information in the Erie Impact Newsletter and encourages municipalities who are doing things right, to share their stories with other municipalities through the newsletter.

The ECPC has also provided access to the Planning Advisory Service through the American Planning Association (APA). For example, this service can be used if an individual is looking for information on wireless technology. Although this is a broad topic, they can pull all recorded, professional research on it from a national database and provide it to those requesting the information at no cost.

Kathy Wyrosdick explained the ECPC is doing all of these things with the intent of holding community conversations discussing where the ECDP and the ECPC wants to be, how to get there, and how to collectively work together to provide services.

VII. Other Business

- A. Municipal Reports
None.

VIII. Adjournment

Flory Kondzielski made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Bill Kuhn seconded that motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.